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To St. John the Evangelist
—A Poem by Sally Appleton

THE

Commonweal

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TURNING POINT FOR BRITAIN

by J. L. Benvenisti

World All Their Own

BLOOMSBURY REVISITED

by Geoffrey Wagner

"The Parrot and the Dove"

CATECHISM AND THE WORD

by Gerard S. Sloyan

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

WORKING FOR THE FUTURE

STRINGFELLOW BARR once compared the United States to a rich suburb surrounded by slums. At first reading, the comparison seems hardly flattering to other nations, but Mr. Barr meant it in no invidious sense. What he was trying to do was to dramatize the fact that the United States is a rich nation and that most of the world is desperately poor.

This contrast between the want that exists in much of the world and the relative prosperity that prevails in the United States makes communication and understanding difficult at best. We have learned a great deal about the rest of the world in the last twenty or thirty years, but it is never easy for those who live in the suburbs to grasp what life is like in the slums.

We in the United States have been singularly blessed. This nation possesses abundant national resources, and a highly advanced technology that is capable of utilizing them. By world standards we are thinly populated, unlike many areas where population is pressing hard on the presently developed national resources. As a result, the realities of daily life in countries like India or Egypt or Viet Nam are for most of us in America almost as remote as conditions on the dark side of the moon.

A recent Reuters dispatch, for example, discussed some of the changes that have taken place in Colombia during the last twenty years. In 1935, the report said, five hundred children out of every thousand born in that country died before reaching the age of one year. Two decades later, thanks to educational programs, economic improvements and the expansion of medical care, the mortality rate had been reduced until only two hundred children died out of every thousand.

This is progress, as progress is measured in many parts of the world. How can Americans be indifferent to the tragedy concealed in such statistics? This nation must, in our view, reaffirm that fact that a world of peace and justice can never be achieved when an infant mortality rate of two hundred per thousand is considered—has to be considered—real progress. To take any other position would be impossible.

Almost a decade ago, the United States instituted the Marshall Plan, designed to restore the economy of Western Europe and to check the advance of Communism. The Marshall Plan was a great experiment, in the best American tradition, and it was tremendously successful. Under the impetus of the aid it provided, the economy of Western Europe picked up almost miraculously. Within a few years the once-silent factories were booming and production rose even beyond pre-war levels. No man can say with complete certainty what would have happened without American assistance, but almost everyone agrees that without the Marshall Plan the Communists would have won the day in at least part of Western Europe. The Marshall Plan clearly paid rich dividends to the cause of freedom.

THE DEBATE over the Marshall Plan began almost ten years ago, however. Then, as now, there were Americans who fought the whole idea of foreign aid. But at that time advocates of U.S. assistance programs overseas had definite advantages on their side. The destruction in Western Europe was obvious. Europe was America's major cultural source. Millions of U.S. citizens had personal ties of ethnic loyalty to the countries concerned, through parents or grandparents. Alarm over Russia's postwar intentions was fresh, and the

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defense of Western Europe was obviously an anti-Communist move.

Most of these conditions do not apply today. The influence of those who talk about "Uncle Sap" and fight all forms of foreign aid is stronger. Economic assistance to the underdeveloped nations outside of Europe is not as obviously anti-Communist as aid to Europe was ten years ago. Americans have grown more used to the constant threats to peace that exist in the world today, and many have simply grown weary of the whole idea of foreign aid; it is far easier today to get an appropriation through for military spending than for economic aid to nations abroad.

For all these reasons, there is real danger in the months ahead that the foreign aid program will be whittled down to the point where it would become almost meaningless. Those who are concerned with the cause of peace have a real obligation to see that this does not come to pass.

If there were no Communism in the world, moral principles would require rich nations to assist the underdeveloped countries. With the world situation what it is, national interest combines with the moral imperative to make such economic assistance a real necessity.

We in the United States must demonstrate to the world our will to peace, and we can best do that by continuing and expanding economic aid. The total devoted to such aid over the years looks large, but in actuality the amount involved is relatively small in relation to our national income. Money spent for this purpose is not money thrown away, as the critics say; rather, economic assistance to the underdeveloped nations represents a national investment in world peace. It is an investment the United States should be glad to make.

GAZA-AQABA

THERE IS STILL some room to maneuver in the Israeli-Egypt impasse. Both nations have moved from their original bargaining positions. Egypt, while silent on Israeli shipping on the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal, has even indicated willingness toward a temporary UN administration of the Gaza Strip. The question is whether the two enemies can ever draw much closer. Basically, Israel is opposed to making permanent the limitations imposed by the 1949 truce. Egypt is badly off balance as a result of the recent Suez blows, but eventually it hopes that the twenty-to-one manpower advantage of the Arab nations—and the wealth derived from oil—will enable them literally to wipe Israel off the map.

Confronted by present manifestations of this mortal enmity, the UN finds a promising solution well-nigh unattainable. As far as actually enforcing the peace goes, it might be said that the United Nations is able to enforce its decisions against small nations which are not satellites, or are not firmly supported by one or more of the few major powers. If this is so, it represents an achievement of sorts, for the UN is thus able to prevent small wars and thereby to control one source of larger conflagrations. The case for such a double standard for weaker and stronger nations is that it is better to keep one source of war in check than not to have any reins at all.

But there is much controversy among the nations that are not directly parties to the present Middle East dispute whether adherence to UN principles does require Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Aqaba before negotiations proceed further, or not. The French and British have already quitted Suez; only Israeli forces retain any of the lands they took by dint of recent battle. They hold Gaza in violation of a 1949 armistice agreement which Egyptian border raids had broken many times. Is this actually a simple case calling for sanctions to force Israeli withdrawal on the ground cited by President Eisenhower, that no assailant can be permitted to profit from an armed attack? (The principle itself is unexceptionable.)

The history of the past few years gives Israel many grounds for placing little confidence in Egyptian agreements, American promises and UN resolutions. And if Ben-Gurion's government fails to hold the line, or to obtain clearly ironclad guarantees (over-simply described as an aggressor's imposing conditions for withdrawal from illegally conquered territory), he will unquestionably be succeeded by a regime that is far less tractable. A wholehearted imposition of sanctions in which the United States would have to take a leading part could even set off a new outbreak on the part of the clearly superior Israeli armed forces.

The choices before American policy-makers are very few. One would be somehow to persuade the Israelis—and the Arabs—that this time American promises mean business. The American Navy might then assume such responsibilities as keeping navigation open in the Gulf of Aqaba. Another would be to back down before the complexities of a situation in which justice and international law are by no means all on one side—this might simply mean supporting some largely pious UN resolution re-

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gardless of the displeasure such a shift would incur in the Arab world. Finally, after a really probing re-examination, we might come forward with a wholly new formula involving the setting up of a series of UN-policed buffer zones that would effectively separate the combatants. Any one of these would seem to offer greater possibilities than the present White House formula, however high-minded.

POLITICAL COURAGE IN GEORGIA

EXTREMISM IN GEORGIA politics is nothing new. The late Eugene Talmadge was for years but one, if the most famous, of its practitioners. Citizens the nation over are too conditioned to be startled when by an overwhelming majority both houses of the state legislature adopted a resolution calling for the impeachment of six of the Justices of the United States Supreme Court because of their decisions on racial and sedition cases. Nor is it too surprising that Governor Marvin Griffin has been provided with extraordinary police powers to head off integration in the schools.

What is more newsworthy and imbued with promise of the better things eventually to come is the success registered by certain state representatives in Georgia in postponing a ban on interracial sports and social activities. This delay results from adherence to parliamentary rules rather than majority sentiment, but it happily reflects a strong conviction on the part of a minority.

"STRANGE CHOICES"

MOST UNIVERSITIES in this country have lectureships which are filled each year by distinguished speakers to whom the universities extend invitations. The invitations are, quite naturally, considered an honor, and the speakers are carefully chosen. In the course of discussing the "strange choices" that Harvard University has made, Raymond Moley recently commented: "It is also worthy of note that three recent Godkin lectureships at Harvard, which I believe are concerned with citizenship, were filled by Adlai Stevenson, Chester Bowles, and Hugh Gaitskell. Perhaps the wisdom of those who have been repudiated by the electorate is of a rare, esoteric sort unappreciated by any except Harvard authorities. Perhaps there is the more practical reason that lame ducks have more time to prepare and deliver lectures."

The reference to a "more practical reason" would suggest that the writer had doubted the rhetorical appeal of his first statement. But no, he recovered his balance and went on. "Can it be that Harvard is more concerned with repairing damaged careers than in the more prosaic task of pursuing and disseminating truth? Perhaps, like Hawthorne's Pyncheon family, Harvard is haunted by the faint smell of witches burned centuries ago and is obsessed by the belief that the public is always wrong."

Harvard is, of course, quite capable of defending itself, and Mr. Moley's statements might readily be dismissed. But, unfortunately, the kind of thinking in which he indulged is all too common. And charges such as his may well be leveled at less august institutions which are unable to withstand attack.

Mr. Moley suggests that Adlai Stevenson, Chester Bowles and Hugh Gaitskell are unqualified to speak on citizenship because they have been "repudiated by the electorate." The quoted phrase is worth examining. Examine it, for instance, with particular reference to one of these men, Mr. Stevenson.

Mr. Stevenson was elected governor of Illinois. From this position he was drafted by one of our major political parties to run for the Presidency in 1952. In the short time he was given to impress himself on the national consciousness he was able to convince 27,000,000 voters that he should be President. In his second campaign he fought for and won a second nomination. In both campaigns he was defeated by one of the most popular Presidents our country has known.

It is generally agreed that it is a high honor to be considered for the Presidency of the United States. And with a two-party system the number of men so honored is very small. But according to Mr. Moley's reasoning the losing candidate has been repudiated. The people have judged him and he has, apparently, little political wisdom. And this in spite of his previous elected positions and large, if losing, support. To reduce this line of reasoning, finally, to the absurdity it is, consider the odd judgments it would force on one if Mr. Stevenson had won the last election. President Eisenhower would then have been "repudiated" and would, presumably, be a poor choice to fill a Harvard lectureship. Adlai Stevenson, "repudiated" four years earlier would, by the will of the people, be suddenly endowed with political wisdom.

Such reasoning is as bewildering as it is useless. Beyond this it is dangerous. For it would render ineffective those men who had entered the demanding world of politics and had lost. Sensible

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efforts would lead to the exact opposite. To lose an election is not to lose learning, political ability and personal wisdom. These are qualities we urgently need in our national life and those institutions which make use of them deserve not carping, confused thinking, but the nation's gratitude.

THE OIL LIFT

HAVE AMERICAN oil companies used the closing of the Suez Canal and Europe's desperate need for oil as a weapon to enforce a gigantic price gouge? Have these companies, in a time of national and international emergency, acted contrary to the public good in order to increase their own profits? Was the Administration wrong to entrust the emergency oil lift to the giant oil companies? These are the serious questions asked by a Senate subcommittee headed by Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney of Wyoming, currently investigating the recently announced oil price rise and the conduct by the major companies of the emergency effort to move oil to Europe.

Spokesmen for the oil corporations deny these charges, of course. They defend the price increase in crude oil as long overdue and insist that they deserve commendation for their achievement in shipping as much oil as they have to Europe. Administration officials, in the main, support the oilmen, although in necessarily more defensive tones. Subcommittee hearings have brought out conflicting testimony and equally conflicting statistics.

Nevertheless, some things have been established as fact. The oil lift did fail to meet the promised quotas of oil shipments to Europe. The management of the emergency effort has been criticized by the one member of the Middle East Emergency Committee who is not a representative of one of the great international oil corporations. The price rise was announced in the midst of a grave international crisis. Official testimony reveals that the price increase will raise oil costs in our armed forces alone by eighty-five million dollars in 1957.

Whatever the final results of the hearings, we think that the investigation even thus far has supported Senator O'Mahoney's main point: that "conflict of interest" must be guarded against when business representatives are acting, temporarily or not, as officials of the government. It may well be necessary to waive anti-trust regulations in time of emergency, and to invest American industrialists with extraordinary powers, but the government must not abdicate its responsibility.

"DIVISIVE" EDUCATION

IN THESE perilous days, we are as much prone to viewing with alarm as anybody, but last week we came upon a couple of news items we like to think are straws in a favorable wind. One was an NCWC dispatch concerning the reorganization of Catholic high schools in St. Louis, separating students according to their ability to learn. Of the eleven high schools involved, two will serve "exceptionally bright" students, eight will be for the middle group, and one for students "for whom the curriculum of the general high school is not suited."

The second item was a report in the New York *Times* on the functioning, during this last semester, of a similar, four-category system in the high schools of Washington, D.C. Students in the Washington high schools are all doing well, according to the report, especially those in the fourth "track," the slow learners, who have made extraordinary progress. There are various explanations for their remarkable advance, but we are most interested in the reasons given by the students themselves: taking school seriously, learning the value of homework, the desire to get out of the fourth track into the general group.

The democratic cultists will no doubt decry these developments as divisive, competitive and un-American. (In the case of the Catholic schools, already labeled divisive, the charge may be of sub-divisiveness.) But we believe that the democratic levelers are wrong, and that the recognition of real differences, like the ones involved here, is essential to the health of a democracy.

Critics of democracy describe it as the reduction of a people to the lowest common denominator, a forced conformity with mediocrity, but we cannot permit them to be right. Democracy is posited on belief in the equality of men as persons and insists upon equal rights and equal opportunities for all. It does not maintain the fiction of natural equality of ability.

It is true that artificial, accidental differences between men—like race or social origin—are sometimes presented as natural and inherent, and we must guard against such error. But let us not fly to an equally hateful opposite extreme and insist upon monolithic sameness as a test of Americanism. It would be as wrong to deprive our intellectually superior children of their opportunities as it would to deprive the less gifted. It is a salutary sign, for our culture and our democracy, that steps are being taken to prevent this deprivation.

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Turning Point for Britain

"THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN KNOW THAT AN IRREMEDIABLE BREAK HAS OCCURRED WITH ALL THEIR PAST"

J. L. BENVENISTI

THE PEOPLE of Britain have instinctively perceived that they have come to a dramatic and fateful turning point in their history. They know that an irremediable break has occurred with all their past, and in the main they have taken the matter calmly. It was perhaps a fortunate coincidence that our withdrawal from Suez occurred just before Christmas; it occurred, that is to say, at a time when packing up, going home and putting the past behind one seemed a natural and more or less seasonable thing to do. Even Christmas, however, did not cause us wholly to lose sight of the devastating significance of the facts, nor did it banish all signs of suppressed emotional disturbance.

Among the latter we must reckon another almost feverish recrudescence of the apparently endless argument as to whether we have or have not ceased to be a first-class power. Exchanges on this subject are now developing into a foolish parlor game, painfully reminiscent of the kind of discussion triggered off by the question, "What is your definition of a gentleman?", and they have much the same qualities of dogmatism, equivocation and irrelevance.

A much more serious matter, I am afraid, is a very palpable hardening of hearts toward America. Even at a reasonable and respectable level, some very harsh things are at the moment still being said—more perhaps than our press might lead you to believe. Such remarks may often be unjust, but they are in the circumstances understandable; for what the United States government seems to have done is to serve notice—at least that is how we interpret the matter—that it will not protect British interests, even vital British interests, when such protection appears to conflict with a major interest of its own.

It is easy to ask why the American government should in such circumstances act any differently, and this may even be a very sensible question to raise. The provision that the President of the United States should be a staunch British patriot is not, I believe, among those laid down by the Founding Fathers. Yet, for all that, what has happened has given us a shock. Most of us never even entertained the possibility of a divergence of interest between ourselves and America, or even—and this is perhaps a more accurate description of what has happened—of a sharp divergence of interpretation as to where those common interests lie.

We have now had a rude awakening and it is only natural that recent events should have strengthened a tendency to draw closer to our European friends. To what extent this constitutes a revival of the "Third Force" idea would be difficult to determine, but there is sufficient evidence in the press that some such notion is again at work. Perhaps we should all be rather less conscious of this element than we actually are, were it not for a kind of sardonic quirk, a piece of "Twelfth Night" puckishness on the part of the historical process. For at this very moment of all others there has been tossed into our lap a project that is positively tailor-made for the prevailing mood. The project is what is called the Common Market, and it has been under discussion for the best part of a year. That it should have reached its critical phase at this particular juncture of our affairs is one of those coincidences on which the authors of popular, and even of classical, comedy often do not scruple to base their plots.

THE NAME "Common Market" is given to a venture which, by their adoption of the Spaak report, the six so-called Messina powers (France, Federal Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries) have committed themselves to try to realize. It entails a customs union between the six countries in question with a common tariff towards the outside world. Within the shelter of this tariff all tariffs between the six countries themselves are to be gradually abolished over a period of twelve to fifteen years. Linked with this project is another for what is called a Free Trade area, itself not surrounded by a uniform tariff, in which the participating countries will work for the gradual abolition of tariffs both between each other and between themselves and the Common Market countries.

Mr. Benvenisti is a British writer and economist who contributes frequently to The Commonweal.

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It is with this latter organization, with the Free Trade area, that Britain will seek to associate herself, and this will give her the possibility of continuing to admit food and agricultural products from the Commonwealth at preferential rates and so too safeguard the highly important reciprocal trading arrangements she has with Commonwealth countries. But it will ultimately throw her own home market open to European manufacturers (as distinct from producers of food and agricultural products) and of course enable her to have the reciprocal right of competing on equal terms with all other countries in Europe itself.

There are almost certainly great material benefits to be derived from this arrangement, and it is not surprising that the British Federation of Industries, the equivalent of the American N.A.M., should have declared itself in principle, and by an appreciable majority of its members, in favor of the project. Up to a point, of course, we cannot help ourselves; to some extent we are in the position of people with a pistol pointed at their heads. If we stood altogether outside the scheme, our exports to Europe would be heavily discriminated against. At the same time a widened market would enable our competitors to attain increased efficiency, which would place us at a disadvantage in almost every part of the world. But these negative considerations are secondary. We favor the scheme because in the long run we believe it will help to raise the standard of living both of ourselves and of the other countries concerned.

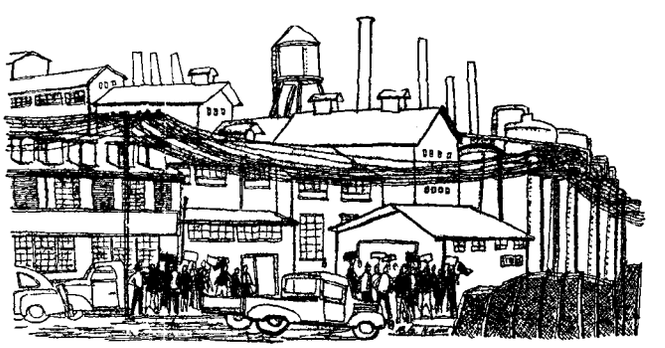
THE REASONING on all this is perfectly sound, but already in this, the first act, the general bedevilment has begun. Under the emotional rush of our present precarious situation and of our uneasy disgruntlement with the United States, there is already evident a tendency to exaggerate slightly the advantages and to play down the difficulties of the plan.

Oddly enough—or perhaps it is not so odd, since they are proceeding on a somewhat misleading analogy from their own past—Americans themselves are often affected in this manner. Indeed, it is in America that the scheme has found some of its warmest supporters. It is therefore as well at this stage to state, as emphatically as possible, that no customs union or free trade area is going to turn Western Europe into the kind of classical economist's paradise of which America herself is so noteworthy and so brilliantly successful an example.

Take one obvious point of difference—the mobility of labor, an integral part of all classical free trade theory and very much a reality in the United States. Here there are two difficulties in the way, a natural, and wholly understandable, reluctance on the part of the worker to be uprooted and bundled off to a place perhaps a thousand miles away, and a rather less creditable reluctance on the part of the workers at the place in question to welcome him when he arrives. The Spaak report expressly insists on a guarantee that foreign workers will not be discriminated against, but it seems dubious that the problem will ever be allowed to reach any substantial proportions. In reality, it is the growing practice in Britain and Europe to take the job to the man rather than to send the man to the job—a practice which, although it has much to commend it on moral, humane and social grounds, is nevertheless anathema to the doctrinaire free-trader and undoubtedly does interfere with the working of his darling and, within its limits, highly efficient machine.

One could, if so minded, dwell at length on the fearful difficulty of ever getting the scheme started at all and on the difficulty of equalizing to some degree such matters as wages, social services and certain forms of taxation. Absolute uniformity on these points is not necessary, but a certain degree of approximation to one another between the various countries will unquestionably be required if anything resembling fair competition is to be attained. One could, in addition, write for pages on the extremely tough problem of correcting disequilibria in payments, if deflation, frequent devaluations of currency and periodic import quotas are ruled out, as they must be. But I would not want to be misunderstood. I do not think the plan is impossible or that it cannot be carried out within the relatively short period of twelve to fifteen years. On the contrary, I think it could have a quite considerable measure of success—but that is just the trouble. The greater its measure of success, the more it will raise old problems in a new and accentuated form.

The purpose of the whole scheme that is now under consideration is to raise productivity, which implies a continuous multiplication of goods. The plan can also imply an increase of leisure, and no doubt that will be one of its results, but the chief result must nevertheless be a multiplication of goods. The point of increased productivity is that the man who can just buy a refrigerator today will tomorrow be able to



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buy himself not only a refrigerator but a new pair of trousers into the bargain. If increased productivity does not have that result, then the whole capitalist process comes to an end.

But, and here comes the snag—which is also the beginning of the comedy's dénouement — the more goods that are put on the market, the greater must be the intake of raw materials. This means, as far as Europe is concerned, a greater need for trade all over the world, and in particular with the less developed countries, for in these there originate so many of the materials themselves and of the dollar earning products—such as Malayan tin and rubber—with which they can be acquired. Thus the very success of any plan for the economic integration of Europe will merely spread and intensify what is at present the key problem of Britain, namely the freedom and security of overseas markets and sources of supply. This in its turn will make the closest possible integration of policy with the United States more necessary than ever, and so will bring the wheel full circle.

THE COMMON MARKET is not the only matter in which our vision is slightly distorted by our present malaise, nor, oddly enough, is it the only one where we suffer the illusion that we can achieve independence from America by a sedulous imitation of her own example. There is a similar false analogy at work in the matter of Australia. Australia and New Zealand are tied to us by particularly strong bonds of sentiment, and there are many who seem vaguely to think that Australia in particular can play the part of the American frontier by giving us similar opportunities for expansion and by helping us to achieve a similar balanced growth of primary and industrial production. In this way, it is felt, we should ultimately be able to achieve at least a degree of security and economic strength faintly comparable to that of America, and with it a faintly comparable degree of self-sufficiency and independence.

Now most certainly, even if the arid interior is discounted—and even that may one day be opened by a drop in the cost of atomic energy—Australia can vastly expand her food base and also increase her production of other primary commodities. Also, most certainly, Australia is clamoring for immigrants. She plans to expand her present population from nine millions to twenty millions in the next twenty-five years, which, after allowing for natural increase, means an annual intake of about a quarter of a million people. Actually, Australia is seeking that increase not so much for economic as for strategic reasons and with a view to building up an industry that will strengthen her potential for defense. Even so, we tend to think of her as above all a primary producer and to picture her development as proceeding on the lines of America's own expanding frontier of nearly a century ago.

Most of Australia's primary production, however, and particularly her agriculture, can undergo a vast expansion without any proportionate increase in on-the-spot manpower, and the chief human agent here is not a man of the frontiersman type but the man in the factory who is producing tractors, bulldozers, automobiles, dynamos, two-way radio-telephones and similar equipment—in other words an urban worker. But before that urban worker can get going, somebody has got to find a quite prodigious amount of capital. It has been estimated that for every immigrant Australia needs about six thousand dollars worth of new public and private investment—investment, that is to say, that will provide not only the instruments of production but the schools, sewers, hospitals, buses, housing and all the other things that will be needed by the immigrant and his family.

Now where is the money coming from? If Britain is to remain competitive in the new European order, she will need every brass farthing she can lay her hands on to plough back into her own industry, and this fact leaves only America as a source of the necessary means.

What all this is leading up to is that the idea of breaking away from America somehow or other is a most pernicious and dangerous illusion. We may not always like the way the United States treats us. In particular we in Britain would be happier if every hoodlum who tags himself with the label of national independence could not always be assured of winning a certain amount of American sympathy. But these things must be borne, and we must continue patiently and without rancor to explain our case. We certainly shall get nowhere by going into a fit of economic and political sulks.

For better or for worse, then, we are linked together in indissoluble wedlock, and we have got to make the best of it. Until now, our conception of the alliance has been that of a kind of Petrine rock on which were founded not only all hopes of the world's peace, but such measure of common decency as still remained in it. That conception may of late have lost some of its validity. If so, we must realize it afresh, for we are most unlikely to find a substitute.

AN APPEAL

Sister Bernadine, a Carmelite who is completing her studies in this country, appeals for the needy convent in India to which she is returning. "We work in schools and orphanages. Our children are of the poorest poor. They must be fed, clothed and educated." Donations should be sent to: Mother Marina, Mt. Carmel Convent, Muttambalam P. O., Kottayam, Kerala State South India (Airmail: 25¢).

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Catechism and the Word

GERARD S. SLOYAN

READERS of *The Caine Mutiny* may remember the early success enjoyed by Willie Keith at Columbia in disgorging a memorized definition of the frictionless bearing, "in words which meant no more to him than a Hindu chant." It brought him official commendation for a brilliant Ordnance paper. At the head of his class now, he went from triumph to triumph on the billows of Navy pedagogy. Until, that is, he gagged in Tactics class on a response from *Submarine Doctrine, 1935,* which said, "Submarines, because of their small cruising range, are chiefly suitable for coastal defense." He proposed to Ensign Brain the small difficulty that Nazi subs were sinking American craft weekly off Hatteras, four thousand miles from home. The ensign, who knew nothing of his subject but who had once learned to read, sourly pointed out that this was a class in tactics not current events. Willie estimated the situation swiftly. Then he said: "Submarines, because of their small cruising range, are chiefly suitable for coastal defense." As the ensign recorded a perfect mark he asked what all the stalling had been about.

Students have been estimating situations for a long time now. In catechism classes there are short-term considerations and long-term ones, but since eternity is a good way off and report cards come out next Thursday, the better part of valor is to respond, when asked, "Besides knowing God by our natural reason, we can also know Him from supernatural revelation —that is, from the truths found in Sacred Scripture or in Tradition, which God Himself has revealed to us." Even when you are eight years old you can get that out, if your parents love you enough (most do) and teachers are patient and kind enough (most are), and there is the relieving prospect of reading twenty minutes later at the same desk in the same classroom: "Look, Father," said Jack, "see where the bonfire is now. It ran away from you" . . . "Get a rake," said Father.

You learn to live in these two worlds because all the grown-ups treat them as if they were one world—just like the Navy—and that helps when you're eight. When you're eighteen and someone is trying to explain to you in a college classroom why the apostolic *paradosis* or *traditio* is all one, some of it committed to writing under divine inspiration and the rest transmitted alive within a believing community, it is much easier to write down the old answer than to engage in any new thinking or learning. Even new listening can be a chore when something that sounds very much like what was drilled in so successfully is proposed for consideration at another level of understanding.

THIS PROBLEM of "the parrot and the Dove," as Canon Drinkwater labeled it long ago, is by no means an exclusively Catholic difficulty. You need not believe in the four marks of the Church to play at this game. Film audiences had a very good catechism lesson taught them recently in "The Little Kidnappers" when the Scots master in a one-room school in western Canada, eight feet tall and bearded, paced his charges through the sonorous phrases of John Knox's *Shorter Catechism.* It was a thrill to hear those declarations of faith come rolling off the screen, just as it is whenever anyone speaks up boldly in a public place about the secrets of heaven told to men: ". . . in vare-tue of the glorious mer-rits of our Lor-rd and Saviour Jesus Christ." I thought I heard a little surprised drawing of breath around me in the theater by people thinking along with me, "Et in Arcadia ego"—"I too have sat in the benches of 'the Immaculate' or 'old St. James's.'" Perhaps this was an illusion but the audible impact of the scene was undeniable, whatever it meant . . . and the picture house was not in a predominantly Presbyterian neighborhood.

Is it good that religion is learned this way? Is it bad? Is it neither good nor bad but something that is just there? I think it is scarcely necessary to challenge the whole assumption by putting the question, "But *is* it still being learned this way?" Somewhere in these forty-eight states it probably is. If there were only one such school the question would be worth asking.

First of all, there is no question here of memorization being a bad thing. Sometimes the whole discussion of religion-teaching is put on this basis and the real issues are confused thereby. Memory is a good faculty. Memorization is one of its proper functions. Little interpretative learning is possible without data that has somehow been stored in the memory, and conscious commitment of data is a surer means to this end than random gleaning.

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Now if the fact is that Christ's words are spirit and life, love will treasure them. Before there is any real awareness of love for Him in the young, their elders will act out of *their* love and share His spirit and life through words. They are likely to insist on some memorization from a very early age (being adults). Their only massive blunder would be in never getting around to *His* words. Getting around to them tardily is bad enough, however. When this is the case, proposing them as appendages to formulas and definitions is the error of supposing that abstract conceptualization is the child's natural mode of thought. It is not. Jesus Christ who knew what was in man was very hesitant to use it even with adults lest His true meaning be misconstrued or no meaning whatever be derived. He constantly ran the risk of having His figurative and poetic speech be taken amiss, rather than render lack of comprehension certain in His bearers by His predicating one abstract notion of another. You do not find "near occasions" in the Gospel but, "Pluck it out and throw it away!"; never "revelation" (the substantive) but, "Father, I thank you . . . for hiding these things from wise and clever men and revealing [telling?] them to simple folk."

The slowness of Nicodemus to comprehend, whether it was actual or feigned, earned Christ's astringent retort. What equipment could he possess to be a teacher in Israel if a simple illustration from nature like the wind in the trees was beyond his grasp? Christ sometimes checked on how much was being absorbed by his hearers with the quick question, "Have you understood all these things?" After the incomparable lesson of the washing of the feet of His friends before the last Passover He said: "Have you understood what I have just done to you?" The good teacher knows that uninterpreted experiences and undigested verbal material alike are not merely the absence of education. They are bad education. Therefore anything resembling them when it is a question of passing along Christ's message of salvation is clearly at variance with His own teaching methods.

Why then does the careful mastery of meaningless material go on in His name? Why is it almost the hallmark of religious instruction? Does anyone influential know about these things, or care? That is the way the parent puts the question, or the interested neighbor who may be hearing a child's lesson at the child's request. "Mike, what does 'purely natural motives' mean?" "Gee, I don't know. Ask the next question."

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY French Sulpician Faillon in his classic summary of catechetical procedure in that great parish church and throughout France, *Méthode de Saint-Sulpice dans la direction des catéchismes* (Paris, 1832), dealt with the problem in this fashion: "However clear, however simple a catechetical instruction may be, the expressions and turns of phrase are entirely different from the language spoken by children. They find there almost none of the terms familiar to them, or if they find them they do not assign them the same meaning. What medium is there to aid their understanding, therefore, if they are not provided with clear explanations proportioned to their limited capabilities? And what will knowing the catechism from memory profit them if their understanding is not enlightened beyond that point? A child who knows his catechism by heart but is unable to understand the things he has learned if they are proposed to him in other terms should not be considered one who knows his religion."

That is clearly put. Yet basic to these views, reasonable as they initially sound, is the assumption that catechism language is in the nature of the case bound to be incomprehensible. Any modern parent or pastor will be familiar with the strenuous efforts of religious pedagogy to enlighten beyond the point of memory The record, over all, is more good than it is bad The children's catechisms and work books grow more attractive in appearance from year to year (though pen-sketches of the kewpie-doll Christ are not unknown). Lorge-Thorndike word lists have been put to use where they apply, with supplemental studies of the incidence of "religion" words. In a word, the ingenuity of teachers in supplying ideas which children can handle for verbalizations which they cannot handle is quite amazing. Parents are constantly in awe of it Yet two questions remain.

Is it not the function of words to convey ideas, not to cry out for them to be supplied from some other source? And are the ideas about religion indicated by these words (even though not transmitted by them) worth all the trouble they take to convey? In other words, is the system reasonable on two counts, as pedagogy, and more profoundly as a message, i.e., as correct reading of the Word of Salvation?

In posing these two questions we have put our finger on certain cleavages which obtain among religious educators who themselves may be unaware of them.

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practice if not in theory catechists and professors of religious pedagogy are divided. One group will struggle almost exclusively to transmit a precise knowledge. Satisfaction is professed if pupils know the letter of the catechism: "by" will not do for "through," and "Holy Father" is unacceptable when the answer reads "Sovereign Pontiff." At the opposite pole are those who make too weak a case not only for memorization but for intellectual effort as well. Their sole objectives seem to be the encouragement of religious practice and the implanting of virtuous habit, with the result that a youthful population however fervent will be almost totally incapable of speaking about its faith.

It should be obvious that the exclusive outlook of either of these groups, whether it be strict intellectualism or pragmatism, hinders its protagonists from grasping the total reality, namely, the development of faith on which our salvation depends. The catechist's aim like the preacher's is to work with grace in the awakening or the increase of that faith which justifies us. This disposition of soul is complex. To arouse certain feelings or to elicit a measure of Christian practice will not do. There must also be the communication of a message from God in its objectivity and integrity. The "twelve articles of the Creed" may sound like abstractions, writes Père Delcuve, but they stand for a single reality: "God present to humanity in order to save it."

Another basic cleavage concerns the place of the child's doctrinal handbook in the scheme of things. At what age should the book first be used, how should it be worded, and so on. Some say: "Well, of course you have to have a book as a point of departure as soon as they can read. It must be so precise and clear that its answers need never be abandoned or revised but only amplified as the years go on. There it will remain lodged in the mind for reference purposes no matter what storms may blow forever after. If it is an infantile statement of truth religion will always seem a childish thing and so it must be phrased maturely. Besides, it is likely to be doctrinally inexact if you put it into child language. No, derive it directly from the creeds and councils, tempering vocabulary only where you clearly need to. Meaning can be and in fact must be supplied when a doctrinal statement seems too baffling to minds at a particular level. Most men are simple, and the danger of scandal in altering notably what has once been conveyed to them as sacred and of God cannot be underestimated."

In response to this line of argument others will say: "It cannot be good pedagogy to use as a device in aid something which works against the end desired. If understanding religious truth is the end, then most catechisms are an unsatisfactory means. They are often neutral in regard to a child's comprehension and sometimes they hinder it. Exegesis of the sacrosanct is tolerable in a text like the Bible whose authorship is divine, but aid books should not aspire so high. Or *has* the catechism any teaching function? Maybe it is not important to teach *with* or *from* it but only *about* it and as it were *around* it. Still (this group continues), we suspect that basically it was meant to be an aid book. If so, need it give so little aid? No, it need not, and the sole reasonable way to improve things is to make it speak to the people for whom it is intended: childishly to children, maturely to adults. The problem is by no means so insoluble as the purity-of-faith-through-formula people would have us believe."

Yet it remains a very complex problem. It surely is not a mere question of long words and short words or long sentences and short ones. It is a question of two different ways of employing language which stand for two distinct casts of mind. In general, language is either scientific (bare, straightforward, matter-of-fact) or it is poetic (evocative, beautiful, suggestive of further meanings). Whenever God has spoken to men it has been to instruct their hearts as well as their minds. He has never communicated with us men idly or for mere information's sake but always so as to move us. Starting with Abraham's call, the Message has been one of an everlasting love. Through Moses, Jacob and all the prophets the plea has been the same, "Return my love, I who have carried you through the desert as a man carries his little son, all the long road you have travelled to reach this spot." And when He showed the fullness of love He sent His Son to say, "May they be one as we are one! As long as I was with them, I kept them loyal to your name, I shielded and sheltered the men whom you have entrusted to me."

The work of theology is quite different from the work of heralding the truth done by the ambassadors of God's great love. Had the prophets, had Jesus himself taught in theology's way, they would not have got a hearing. The theologian's task is to systematize and define the Tidings once proclaimed; he must contemplate their meaning and erect a structure of truth in scientific language, consciously eliminating all imagery lest the meaning of the divine message be mistaken. But when the theologian addresses himself to hearers incapable of the abstractions and precisions which are the justification and the glory of his science, he not only will not be mis-taken. He simply will not be "taken."

THE CHILD'S psychology is a prime consideration in all this, and not the adult's dim memory of what it was like to be a child. The adult who would write a successful catechism must struggle to rid himself of all tendency to be intellectual and analytic, scientific and disjunctive. He must think in large units. He must convert all but a very few ideas into the measurable, the seeable. He must not hesitate to be as poetic and direct

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as God himself was under the Old Covenant or as Christ the master teacher. A man may be a good theologian but a poor catechist, simply because he conceives his task to be one of transmitting his science to the young in acceptable juvenile form. As catechist he has quite another function. Misconception of his role will usually result in heroic attempts at short words. Yet "grace" is short and it is totally uninformative to the child; so are "avoid," "offend" and "near" in the phrase "near occasion" ("near" is only a space word to the young mind). Sometimes the theologian slips. He will say "enlightenment," "apostolic," and "supernatural" before you can stop him (because even a small child knows what light is, he will explain, or an apostle, or what is natural).

The first function of a catechism is to proclaim the Good News entrusted by Christ to His apostles. That will mean a slow and careful building up of the concepts of God's majestic love and the intimate attraction He exerts through His Son. The inductive method must prevail. God's stative ("quiescent") attributes need development for the child much less than His operative ones. Even then, He should be described as the God who knows all and wills the good of all only in a context of the earthly life of Christ. The Savior's teaching, His pervading sense of sonship of an unseen Father, His compassionate interest in all men, His reliance on the Spirit to achieve all that He is working for are the ideas that have to be developed. This will lead naturally to a treatment of His redemptive death and resurrection, and to that community of believers in sacred signs of the power of that death and resurrection (the sacraments) which bring them as a community to the Father's banquet table.

"Why did Christ suffer?" Bishop Challoner's eighteenth century catechism asks. "For our sins." "Why should we say the Hail Mary often?" "To put us in mind of the Son of Man being made man for us." "What is the Church?" "All the faithful under one Head." Perhaps those answers are too terse for our times but they are doctrinally unexceptionable, quite understandable, and have none of the repetitive jingle that children have grown used to chanting. They could serve wonderfully in a group of three or four as the culmination of a well-developed lesson (which should also include many of Christ's sayings), for memorization, for doctrinal surety, for a lifetime of reference. But all the good work would have been done before they are proposed. However carefully it may be attempted, the exegesis of material meaningless at a first reading is a dead end in religious pedagogy as it is in all pedagogy.

WORLD ALL THEIR OWN

Bloomsbury Revisited

GEOFFREY WAGNER

THE BLOOMSBURY group—of writers, painters, and critics—was formed in the early years of this century, shortly after the death of Sir Leslie Stephen in 1904; Stephen's two daughters, Virginia and Vanessa, took a house with their brothers in that peculiarly depressing section of London known as Bloomsbury. Here they were befriended, and married, by a number of young undergraduates from Cambridge, who included Clive Bell, Leonard Woolf, and Lytton Strachey. The members of this group thought of themselves as vaguely avant-garde, as peculiarly gifted and "civilized," and opposed to the taste of their immediate forebears. However, as J. K. Johnstone puts it in his *The Bloomsbury Group*, a pious piece of exposition that corrects earlier errors (such as those of David Daiches in his study of Virginia Woolf), "it would be wrong to think of them as revolutionaries in the intellectual world. They stood squarely within a tradition . . . they wanted to sweep out some trash, move in some new furniture, and rearrange the rooms."

Bloomsbury was never an issue for my generation in England, coming of age after the second World War, and I even first studied the movement that goes by this name with a certain amount of sympathy, since I approached it through what seemed like unfair attacks. Wyndham Lewis' *The Apes of God* and Roy Campbell's *The Georgiad* protested too much, I felt; the "Bloomsburies" could not *all* have been pacifists, pederasts, and literary pimps. Now, having read most of the books listed by Mr. Johnstone, as well as a number of new volumes of Bloomsburyana (for these writers write on each other incessantly), I feel in a better position to appreciate *Blast*.

Mr. Wagner, a novelist and art critic, is the author of the forthcoming *Wyndham Lewis* (Yale University Press).

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The *Letters* exchanged between Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey (Harcourt, Brace. $4.) do seem to reveal Bloomsbury at its most inessential. Faced by them, one may indeed ask what this movement produced. In Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* it produced what D. S. Savage has called the most boring book in the English language, while Vanessa Bell has certainly perpetrated some of the worst paintings in the world. (One of the *very* worst is lovingly reproduced in David Garnett's recent *The Flowers of the Forest.*) Duncan Grant, whom Garnett now claims is the painter Mellors dislikes at the end of *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* is not much better, despite the Penguin monograph by Raymond Mortimer, who gives all these memoirs glowing puffs as they appear.

Lytton Strachey, whose present correspondence shows the fantastically high opinion he held of himself (in his condescension to Katherine Mansfield, for example), will go down with Roger Fry as a popularizer, a disseminator via inaccurate biographies of precisely that torpid amateurism, that philistinism even, which Bloomsbury boasted of opposing. In these new letters Strachey's arch coyness, his smug whimsy (not to mention his one poem) become at times almost unbearable, and one is forced to stop reading, to ask oneself how any man could write this stuff. The collection finally reveals one ghastly proposal of marriage to Virginia Woolf ("I realized the very minute it was happening, that the whole thing was repulsive to me"); Virginia evidently accepted but, gentleman that he was, Strachey backed down. Fifteen years later Mrs. Woolf knows better; she invites "this extremely tall perverse amorist" (to use Wyndham Lewis' phrase) to join some "exquisite ladies—but your taste doesn't lie that way."

BY STANDARDS of serious comparative literature, in short, the pretensions of this group seem insufferable today. In one letter Strachey describes W. J. Turner as "a very small bird-like man with a desolating accent . . . but really a nice little fellow, when one has got over the way in which he says 'count.' " (This tedious snobbery accounts for the bogus archaisms, like "How d'y do?", that Virginia Woolf imported into her fiction in the evident belief that they were U-speech; "I wish you'ld come to tea," writes Strachey.) In the same way Virginia Woolf found *Ulysses* "an illiterate, underbred book . . . the book of a self-taught working-man, and we all know how distressing they are," and she rejected it for her husband's press. (E. M. Forster's dislike of Joyce in *Aspects of the Novel* of this time—since repudiated—was doubtless due to these unsavory associations, yet Virginia Woolf here dislikes Forster's writings as much as Henry James', it seems, "urbane & sleek, but vulgar.") In actual fact, Virginia Woolf persistently vulgarized Joyce, as Garnett vulgarized Colette. Colette's attentive examination of extra-marital love arose from a dissatisfaction with woman's role in the French marriage; her heroines are haunted by remorse, by *taedium vitae*. Even in Françoise Sagan, adultery is by no means condoned; Miss Sagan's heroines are essentially sinners (the judgment becomes plain at the end of *Bonjour Tristesse*). The heavy-handed hedonism of Garnett's recent *Aspects of Love* reveals the real coarseness of the British writer's mind; the erotic ring-a-roses is here cheaply divorced from any moral pattern (the true heritage of Bloomsbury's self-conscious "emancipation") and loses all significance, becoming merely aspects of lust.

Similarly, there are incidents imported into *Mrs. Dalloway* from Joyce and deprived of taste. In this famous novel, as elsewhere, Mrs. Woolf clearly feels that social class is the stabilizing element, and so that Clarissa Dalloway may not be "underbred" gives her "courtiers" as ancestors and a Prime Minister as party guest: "greatness was passing, hidden, down Bond Street, removed only a hand's-breadth from ordinary people who might now, for the first and last time, be within speaking distance of the majesty of England, of the enduring symbol of the state which will be known to curious antiquaries, sifting the ruins of time, when London is a grass-grown path." But the kings of this world, we know all too well, are temporal, as Proust depicted them in his ultimate two volumes, permitting only art (because it is transcendental) to confer permanence.

APART FROM their love of mammon in the form of social class, the Bloomsbury writers were hopelessly inbred. What is more, they were cut off (by pacifism) from sharing in an experience common to their fellow-men. In Garnett's *The Flowers of the Forest* we barely know a war is going on for the parties, week-ends and general gaiety—"Men liked me . . . women fell in love, or were charmed, at the first meeting." War intrudes its ugly head only once into poor Strachey's correspondence: "My 'medical board' yesterday pronounced me 'permanently & totally unfit for any form of Military Service'—which is a great relief. The whole thing was infinitely more civilised than I've ever known it before."

Strachey seems too busy trying to place reviews of his friends' books to know much about a war. And, in the final analysis, Virginia Woolf's work too is robbed of real compassion and humanity. There remains, thankfully, E. M. Forster. Were it not for him the Bloomsbury movement would go down not merely as a "distressing" moment in British literature, but as one scarcely "civilised."

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THE SCREEN

BIRD THOU NEVER WERT

HOLLYWOOD, concentrating as it does on films of action and plot, seldom uses its celluloid to extol the spirit. For that reason alone, the Leland Hayward-Billy Wilder production based on the first solo non-stop flight from New York to Paris —an achievement that was a triumph of mind, body and spirit—deserves commendation. "The Spirit of Saint Louis" (named after that famous first plane, which was named after the city of the project's backers, which was named after the warrior saint) is in itself an outstanding film; it avoids the pitfalls awaiting a movie with only one main character, and it emphasizes the positive: young Lindbergh's interest in flying, his determination to make this solo flight and his perseverance in combating the forces of nature and human frailty.

The success of this extraordinary movie is due to the cooperation of everyone who worked on it, especially Hayward for his handsome production in CinemaScope and WarnerColor, and Wilder for his excellent direction of James Stewart and the large cast as well as for the good screenplay he wrote with Wendell Mayes from Lindbergh's autobiographical book. James Stewart, with the help of his lanky figure and some very good make-up, looking remarkably like Charles A. Lindbergh in 1927, gives one of the best performances of his distinguished career. He is free of his usual mannerisms and he effectively suggests Lindy's shyness without being cute and the aviator's tenacity without appearing belligerent.

Like Lindbergh's book, the major part of the movie is taken up with the long flight, the 33 hours and 30 minutes it took to cover 3,610 miles. Through Stewart's conversations with a fly (the only passenger) and through monologues, we learn what Lindy thought about and felt, how desperately he fought the sleep which overtook him every now and then, how his will impelled him to go on even when his exhausted body seemed to fail him, how he feared death when the wings of his single-engine plane became covered with ice, how he welcomed the sight of Ireland when he flew over Dingle Bay and how fatigue caused him to panic when he finally and apprehensively landed at Le Bourget Airfield. The film wisely breaks the monotony of the long flight and the period of waiting before the take-off with flash-backs—not the usual inanities about an intrepid, reckless flier, but revealing bits about Lindy's youth, his enthusiasm for flying, his barnstorming and carrying the mail, the building of *The Spirit of St. Louis* and Lindbergh's anxiety to win the prize money for the first non-stop New York-Paris flight as well as to advance the cause of aviation.

Since Charles A. Lindbergh, himself, has seen this fine film and has wholeheartedly endorsed it, I presume he also approves of the movie's religious references: his statement that he believes only in instrument panels and things he can touch—and he "can't touch God"; the later episodes built around the St. Christopher medal which was sneaked into his plane by a friend; and finally, as the exhausted flier approaches Le Bourget, his prayer for a safe landing. "The Spirit of St. Louis" will win huzzahs for its excellent cinema, for its success in making viewers participate in a fellow-man's experiences and for its faithful restaging of a milestone in history. But most of all, in this downbeat Age of Anxiety, it is a film that deserves praise for its celebration of the human spirit.

HOLLYWOOD makes a couple of other stabs at inspirational stories in new releases, but neither of them is quite as inspiring as its film makers intended. "Battle Hymn" tells the story of Dean Hess, a Protestant minister who in 1950 began to be disturbed about his calling. His doubts stemmed back to World War II when he was a flier and especially to one incident in which his bombs accidentally fell on a church and an orphanage. Prompted to re-enlist in 1950, Hess is sent to Seoul where he trains Korean pilots and proves quite a hero. He really finds himself, however, when he becomes interested in the many homeless Korean children who are wandering around in this battle-scarred country. Rock Hudson plays the role of Dean Hess with great sincerity, and he is well supported by Don DeFore and James Edwards as fellow officers; Dan Duryea as his sergeant; lovely Anna Kashfi as the nurse who runs the orphanage to which Hess devotes all his spare time; Martha Hyer who returns with Dean after the war to visit the youngsters, and many others as Americans and North and South Koreans. The trouble with "Battle Hymn" as a film is that its story is stretched too thin. While the audience admires Col. Hess and what he did for the children, the movie itself is seldom very gripping —and at times it is downright dull.

NO DOUBT "Three Brave Men" also means to show the spirit of American freedom and justice at its best. It tells the story of a man who has worked for the Navy Department for some twenty years and then is suddenly released as a security risk. After a long time his hard-working lawyer finally wins him a hearing from a carefully chosen Naval Board and even a recommendation for reinstatement. But the Navy fails to act. The man not only fails to get his old job back, but, with his name under suspicion, he

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cannot get any job at all. After another long period, the Assistant Secretary of Navy reopens the case and eventually the long-suffering, falsely accused man is reinstated with full back pay.

The film is well acted by Ernest Borgnine as the "security risk," Ray Milland as his determined lawyer, Dean Jagger as the Assistant Secretary who admits the Navy could possibly make a mistake—these are the "Three Brave Men"—and Frank Lovejoy and Nina Foch as officers on the Naval Board. They are well supported by many others as Borgnine's family, friends and enemies (many of whom can't tell a security risk from a Communist). And director-writer Philip Dunne based his script on the Pulitzer Prize-winning articles by Anthony Lewis (about the real Abraham Chasanow case). In spite of all this, the movie is more likely to impress audiences with American injustice than with American bravery. Too easily do the Naval investigators accept the accusations by neighbors that Borgnine is a radical because he's in favor of co-operatives. "Three Brave Men" does not fail to point out the suffering through which the wrongly accused man and his family went, but it does fail to tell off the irresponsible accusers and the careless Government officials who can't tell the difference between malicious gossip and a factual report. This disturbing story well deserved to be told, but such a report on miscarriage of justice in a democracy should be told with irony and bite, not with whitewash.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

To St. John the Evangelist

He was not afraid
Of world convulsion, ending,
Stars cast down, mountains
Drowned in sea; the dart
Of Jacynth was not his
Nor the fire; he was not
Clothed in a gown of white,
Pressed with a sign.
His was a book to eat,
Bitter for his bowels,
Honey for his tongue;
His life to prophesy,
His action to obey,
To taste and see,
To touch and hear
The numbers of our end.

The breast for his head
Had changed into power,
The body of his love
Had withered with his age.
Youth was no longer
To be lived; now a sage,
Dried, solitary, trusting
The assignment of his King,
He sat on an island
In his skull, to wait—
What place had a man,
What friend could he bring?
He was too old lived
To need, to fear; but how
Could the mortal survive
As he took from a bow
Of fire, a foot on the sea,
On the earth, took from the sun
A book, as his share?

Son of man
Stand upon thy feet—
Stand up that I may speak
To thee. Hold thy flesh
True to the fire.
What is it to thee. Remain
Until I come again.

Lord, is no end for me,
Never to be saved or damned,
Disciple whom you loved,
But to see: to tell, not
To be part of the tale, Lord
Is this how love is
For the old? I will
Lie down with the beasts;
Wrapped up in my hair, I
Will die somewhere
Between the vision I have
Been and my life as a man.

*

Come dance, my John,
Rise up again and dance
Your old bones. Shake out
Your vision, walk on the land
Spread out your beard
So the children can see.

Come John, my friend,
Do not forget us, but sing
Of your love and tell
How you stood unafraid
At the feet of the Lord. Come
John, we are young,

Unacquainted with awe;
Prepare us that time,
Help us grow strong, teach
Us our end like a dream,
And in sleep we will reach
By the book to your hand.

SALLY APPLETON.

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COMMUNICATIONS

"ASSAULT FROM WITHIN"

Sayville, N. Y.

TO the Editors: It is good to see the "conspiracy of silence" broken by Mr. Lawrence Podell's "Assault From Within" [Jan. 25]. He has exposed a number of the forces by which academic institutions seem to have brought exacerbated educational problems on themselves. And, I might say, through which they have perpetuated today's vaguely anti-intellectual contempt for knowledge and the knowledgeable.

He spells out the consequences of the acceptance of the merchandising of education with its demands for attractive packaging and bought—like most modern commodities—on credits. But, more importantly, he brings out what is really the peculiarly perverse concept of today's professionalization, a type practiced increasingly in our schools and universities. Its epitome is that incredible anomaly—a teachers' college.

It is the concept that professionalization equals the impersonal. It is the view that counsels mechanization of approach and formularization of results. It is the avoidance of entanglements in the humanity of the problems examined. It is the stress on techniques, not knowledge. It gives rise to absurd articles couched in impossible (though, fortunately, transitory) jargon. It encourages avoidance of ultimate questions and ultimate impact.

How much of this "attitude" is a consequence of the German influence on our system through Harvard of the 80's with its insistence on the primacy of research it is hard to tell. Certainly the dean's anxious concern for the catalogue, and the professor's irritation at the precious hours "wasted" on classes are in this heritage.

How much of it is the aura of any institution that desires to be acceptable and minimize risk, hence to avoid personal commitments and positions, it is hard to tell.

But, frankly, this writer believes much of the fault lies with the very success of those "able" scholars Mr. Podell cites as flowerings of a better time. The avoidance, indeed ignorance, of ultimate philosophical concerns that once gave biologists, physicists, sociologists and theologians common grounds of communication; the success of utilitarian objectives, of "education for life," of the watering of course content: all can be, in large part, attributed as much to the influence of John Dewey and Thorstein Veblen as to any other forces.

This writer would not charge these two with that which passes for the popularization of their doctrines. But clever men oft fail in their responsibility to remember that "royalists are more royal than the king."

This writer suggests that Christopher Dawson's critique of Dewey's influence (appearing in the same issue as Mr. Podell's article) points up the basic reason for watering down and conforming to. The dogmata of education as active participation in the rigorous religion of democracy leave little point to the traditional concerns of scholars.

The view of Thorstein Veblen pertinent to our concern is summed up in Chapter Eighteen of *The Theory of the Leisure Class*: "The forces which have shaped the development of human life and of social structure are, no doubt, ultimately reducible to terms of living tissue and material environment." Here we have one of the progenitors of our metallic sociological writings of today with their belief that to categorize is to explain and to label to dismiss. Whatever the degree of sincerity in Veblen's determinism, the fact of it makes absurd the basic tenets of humanism and traditional scholarship—those tenets of common truth personally held and freely reasoned to. Obviously when all truths are relative and man a product of external irrational forces, then utilitarianism and techniques become the logical, the only "reasonable," ends of education.

Mr. Podell has described well the symptoms of a much deeper disease—a disease academic institutions suffer in common with other social structures and academicians with all of us. It is a disease, however, to which scholars helped contribute the basic germs long before they came to perpetuate it with the techniques of contagion that Mr. Podell reveals to us.

HUGH H. MERCER.

"REPORT ON COMMUNISM"

Ryegate, Mont.

TO the Editors: One is strongly tempted to accuse Mr. Michael Harrington ["Communism after Hungary: In the U.S.," Feb. 1] of a certain naivete. He speaks of the possibilities of a "dialogue" with those Communists of the "majority of the Party" who have made "one extraordinarily significant break: they no longer accept the Moscow line." In attempting a distinction between those who "were members of a foreign espionage apparatus" and "the majority of the Party," I think Mr. Harrington is coming close to indulging in what Gunnar Kumlien in the same issue calls "subtle hairsplittings reminiscent of the excess of medieval scholasticism."

After reading Kumlien, Fogarty and Barrat on the same subject, I, for one, do not find it possible to believe that the Hungarian uprising will make the tremendous difference in the attitudes of the "majority" which Mr. Harrington thinks possible in this country. If Communism is an ideology and a way of life for the majority of its party members in this country (and is it not from the majority that the "tiny minority" who indulge in espionage are taken?), it seems that

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it will take more than an uprising in a satellite to shake deeply the convictions of the dedicated Communist. The "democratic" expression of opinion of a *few* of the majority cannot be construed as a mass movement in the ranks. If the previous blood purges and totalitarian strictures of Soviet Communism have not brought about a mass disillusion, how can we expect the suppression of a unique (it is true) revolt to accomplish it? One of the foundations of Communism remains that the advance of "people's socialism" is to be accomplished through the *violent overthrow* of opposing governments.

Therefore should we be so ready to begin a "dialogue" with those members of the Party who have so courageously spoken up to voice protest against the suppression of the revolt in Hungary? To repudiate violence *in Hungary* is not enough to warrant such a dialogue.

One of the recurring themes in The Commonweal's report on "Communism after Hungary," is that in order for us to gain the allegiance of those who were shaken loose from the Party by the Hungarian uprising, we must present them with "true democracy" as the alternative. But what is meant by that? Will not socialism, whether it be democratic socialism or a sort of national communism, be the more appealing? This invites not only a review of what we call "democratic government," but also of the economy which is the substructure of that government. To the Communist the joined battle is between "people's" socialism ar capitalism. *Is* there a democratic socialism? Is there a *Christian* democratic socialism? In the United States it would seem that we are not willing to discuss this question, that the only alternative we have to offer is capitalism as it is practiced here.

And so a final question: if a "dialogue" were desirable, what direction could it take in the United States?

(*Rev.*) JAMES F. KITTLESON.

REPLY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: First, to clear up a confusion. I referred to the "majority" of the Communist Party as not having engaged in espionage. I didn't state that the *majority* had become independent and no longer accepted the Moscow line. From the results of the recently concluded Communist Party Convention, one would guess that, *at the very best,* a third of the delegates were moving in that direction (toward independence). Since the Convention itself was a compromise of all basic issues, it is hard to predict what will happen to those still in the Party in the near future.

But more importantly, I think Father Kittleson underestimates the impact of Hungary upon the American Communist Party. At the Convention, one delegate told of a twenty per cent membership loss in his branch because of Hungary, and my impression is that this is a low figure. The Party now claims 26,000 members. I would personally guess that such a figure doubles the real number and that a significant group has left in the last six months. It is these people who pose a real problem to the democrat. An alternative must be presented to them.

I put the alternative in terms of political organization rather than as a question of economic structure, i.e. that it be a position of democracy everywhere, in Budapest, in Moscow, in Formosa and in Madrid. The reason for this relates to the experience being undergone by members of the Party today. The question which *they* are facing is that of democracy, the rights of workers, of peasants, of national self-determination. It is necessary that the alternative be couched as an answer to the problem as they pose it.

If I get Father Kittleson's implication correctly, I agree very much that it is unfortunate that Americans

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pose the issue as one of capitalism as against Stalinism. The immediate task with regard to the Communists is to win them to democracy, to break them from totalitarianism. Then the further implications of their break can be probed.

To repeat my general point: now, as never before, it is necessary to offer a clear-cut democratic alternative to those breaking with Communism.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON.

SALARIES OF LAY TEACHERS

Somerdale, N.J.

TO the Editors: The January 25th issue, in the editorial section, spoke of the survey in *Ave Maria* magazine concerning lay teachers.

Three years ago, I took as my initial teaching assignment a position as an instructor in English in a Catholic high school—not, I should say, in the state in which I now live. The faculty was a large one, and it included ten lay teachers. We liked our jobs, we were treated well, the religious faculty included us, in the main, in school matters. There was little, if any, friction in this regard.

As lay teachers we felt that we had a significant and important position, that our mission complemented that of the religious order with which we worked. We felt that this compensated for the low salary and lack of any other security. We felt that we had much to offer as lay teachers and were proud of a certain sense of sacrifice. By weekly deductions from our pay, for example, we began a scholarship fund for a needy student, and had the pleasure of sending a young man to a Catholic college with a year's tuition and fees.

By the end of our first year, it became evident to the married men that they could not make ends meet on their school salaries alone. We were willing to take part-time jobs—and did. But it occurred to us during this time that it would not be amiss to petition the superintendent of the diocesan school system for certain items like a nominal salary schedule (maximum $3600 per annum, if my memory serves me), some form of health insurance either wholly or partly paid for by the diocese, tenure, an additional increment for advanced degrees—in a word, some recognition of our status. All we acquired from this was a reputation for being mild Bolsheviks.

The following year, 1955, we again petitioned, this time directly to the Archbishop. Our answer was—no answer. No answer, either written or spoken. It was then that the lay faculty began to diminish.

We felt our petition was rendered in complete justice, to our needs, to the needs of our families. Some form of recognition probably would have held us at that school. We were confounded at being ignored.

I believe firmly that the schools who have lay teachers on the faculty are convinced of their need for them. Certainly, at Catholic educators' conventions this is affirmed repeatedly. All pay lip-service to the need for, the worth of, the lay teacher. But it appears to be less expensive to hire beginning teachers at low salaries and then let them slide away as soon as they ask for a little more security. Apparently the administrators are quite willing to use their schools as training grounds at low cost in dollars and cents rather than pay to keep a stable and devoted lay faculty. But at what cost to the students and the general educational tone of the institution? . . . This happened almost two years ago. I have been teaching in the public schools since that time. While attempting to be dispassionate, I can truthfully say that I was soured on the idea of teaching in a Catholic school by the experience of the ignored petition. If it is true that the same thing is happening in many other Catholic schools—and it seems to be—the sum total of these mistakes will do grave damage to Catholic school systems. The responsibility for the consequences of this shortsightedness should burden the administrators heavily. A Jovian disregard of the situation is certainly not the answer.

ANDREW B. MCCOSKER, JR.

Alexandria, Va.

TO the Editors: Regarding your editorial "Laity in Catholic Schools" [Jan. 25], I wish to add a hearty Amen. After six years of college and graduate school and two degrees, I was informed by the President of a highly reputable Catholic women's college that I might (no guarantee) be able to obtain a position with them next fall at $3,000 a year.

A clerk-typist (GS-3) with the Federal government starts at approximately $3,200. A common laborer in the Washington area makes about $2.10 an hour, which comes to over $4,000 a year. If I were to obtain a position with the Federal government, I would probably start at $4,525 a year, with increases to $6,500 virtually guaranteed within a few years. And, of course, these figures are notoriously low compared with salaries offered by large business concerns.

How one is supposed to be able to be married and raise a Catholic family with a salary at $3,000 a year is something neither I, nor I dare say anyone else, can determine. I realize fully the financial difficulties faced by most Catholic colleges, but this knowledge will not provide food for my family. Of course, I have been speaking only of my own experience, but I think it is reasonable to assume that others have encountered this same difficulty. I can offer no immediate suggestions, other than the pious hope that wealthy Catholics might be a bit more charitable (and sensible) with their money, but I can say this. I will not force my family to subsist on $3,000 a year.

ROSS M. HARDTER.

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Wit, Knowledgeability and Feeling

PLAYBOOK: FIVE PLAYS FOR A NEW THEATRE. New Directions. $3.75.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

THESE are plays "for a new theatre"—a theatre which evidently means to encourage imaginative freedom flowering from a highly sophisticated life-view, but with no messages, no big scenes in which somebody and his "values" are told off or warmly recommended or even just summed up. None of the plays in this generous book could be called social drama, in the Arthur Miller sense, and none could be called realistic in the sense of offering a slice of life or a "typical" segment of society. Two are based on Greek legends—they attempt to spell out what the legends left to our imagination; two have to do with magic—in one there is a real magic cloth, in the other a conjurer; the fifth is a fantasy, just one step above a conventional or realistic piece, about Americans in Europe. Yet, slice of life or no, there is of course another way in which a playwright can be realistic, that is by being sensible and honest in his attitude toward human aspiration and human limitation, even if his stage settings are not pseudo-ordinary nor his language awkward.

Three of these plays seem to fall together in some respects; shaped with a cool and jaded assurance, they speak of a sad world-weariness undogmatically, with grace and wit. In "The Immortal Husband" James Merrill's modern Tithonus, who grows to be 118 years old, makes a dreadful-comic spectacle in his cocoon of blankets as he mutters stale slogans he once made fun of and his eternally young wife Aurora slips away with a handsome youth. In Lionel Abel's "The Death of Odysseus," the old hero realizes with dismay that, his famous casuistic courage and cleverness having failed him, he must now rely on genuine valor at a time which is nonetheless bound to be fatal. Robert Hivnor's wise and very funny "The Ticklish Acrobat" tells of an earnest young American archaeologist in a dilapidated Dalmatian hill town, who keeps uncovering layer after layer of relics of previous civilizations, "searching for the past," until he happens to get into trouble with a visiting American girl and, under the pressure of a famous old American tradition, is forced to marry her.

"A Leak in the Universe," by the poet and critic I. A. Richards, is a cocky but puzzling tale of a man who has a little box that annihilates anything that is put into it. Mr. Richards is evidently spoofing, as a diabolical temptation, the modern belief that "nothing" is the center of the universe. This piece sounds less blasé than the three mentioned above—being, if I don't read it incorrectly, a comment on the impotence of negative thinking—but then it is not about persons or feelings but about ideas or attitudes.

"Twilight Crane" is another matter. It is an unabashed tragic fable of love and betrayal by a Japanese writer, Junji Kinoshita, and translated by A. C. Scott. This tale is realistic in the sense that it tells honestly, within its own terms, of a man's faithlessness. Somehow, with its composition of modest elements—a wife who can supply her husband with a miraculous cloth, a husband who is persuaded by greedy friends to sell the cloth for money, a small group of neighbor children who appear from time to time—it creates a compelling image of sorrows even on the printed page. This play does not originate from a set of sophisticated premises, as the others do; the sadness, the cynicism, come rather as a result of the drama, which begins with a wide view of happy possibilities and then shows the spoiling of that view. Instead of being taken for granted from the start, the cynicism is engendered between the rise of the first curtain and the fall of the last. This process makes a plot in which feeling is awakened and altered; the other plays, for all their wit and knowledgeability (which I wouldn't want sacrificed), mostly keep the feeling off-stage, so that they will have plenty of room to amuse an illuminate us.

Merrill's suave, meticulous elegance is as evident in "The Immortal Husband" as in his verse. His play is wittily saturated with symbolic allusion, with commentary on time, on youth and maturity, on resignation and responsibility, on desire and death. A stuffy housekeeper complacently assures the young Tithonus that death must be accepted, and as she speaks she bites off a thread, like a Victorian Atropos. Aurora is pictured as a brash young goddess of the dawn, unable ever to see the dark side of things. There is muted pain and loveliness now and then—a plain young girl realizes that physical beauty *is* important; the middle-aged Tithonus talks with a sickly woman about the passion for idealism, with its attendant disillusionments, compared with the advantages of compromise and resignation ("Compromise is to our souls what sleep is to our bodies").

Hivnor's comedy is more brash than Merrill's; what it is about is hard to say, except that it concerns Americans, brimming with purpose, and Europeans, mostly just being true to their seedy or noble, lusty or philosophical natures, they know not why. But it is not a misty concoction. With its acrobats, its tattooed lady decorated all over with a whole history of art ("Post-impressionism. Cubism. Vorticism. My God, I've been through them all"), its Kilroy-type character, its American do-gooders and do-badders, it is a play of concrete personalities and predicaments, all brightened up with a wonderful imaginative humor. Abel's "Death of Odysseus" is fashioned out of complications of meaning. Many of its statements are "twists" on what has been said before, so that we have the effect of a sustained virtuoso experiment, with more brilliance than

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emotion. "A Leak in the Universe" is probably as difficult to play as it is to read, and it is a pity that the humorous possibilities that seem to lurk within its paradoxes are not developed and brought nearer to the surface.

All five plays, as a matter of fact, e disparate, because they are *sonal.* This quality can be pri- te, precious, and arbitrary; but it can also be original, sincere, and compassionate—the compassion, in all but the Japanese play, working from without, on the manipulation of subject, rather than from within as a dramatic effect. And it is to the credit of the publishers that the greater part of this book shows the modern comic or lyric impulse in a most handsome, realized, communicative form. Even so eccentric and refractory a conceit as Mr. Richards' play has an external palpable glitter that would indicate some wish on the author's part to make his jokes and comments available to his audience.

Rue with a Difference

TO SEE THE DREAM. By Jessamyn West. Harcourt Brace. $3.95.

By JEAN HOLZHAUER

JESSAMYN WEST is the author of *The Friendly Persuasion,* a beguiling and sentimental story of those excellent people, the Quakers. If one were acquainted only with the movie into which it was made, one would wonder how so much was left out of this account of the Quakers. Mistrustfully, one would be likely to blame Hollywood. The blame would not be wholly misplaced.

To See the Dream is a journal of Jessamyn West's experiences in Hollywood during the filming of her story. One episode describes a conversation with a film director who admires Quakers and had decided not to show them sitting in meeting with the women separated from the men in the congregation. This practice, he thought, showed Quakers in an unattractive light.

But the fault is not entirely Hollywood's. *To See the Dream* is the revelation of a sensibility as incredible as any the film capital has ever produced. Presumably authentic, since it is a private journal (kept without intention to publish?), it is more than sentimental, cliche ridden, automatic in its selection and interpretation of detail according to popular magazine standards, and to any other taste almost unbearable. Choosing at random, we find sentences like:

"This is the most beautiful, beautiful morning of wind. Of all the phenomena of weather, wind is to me—I started to say 'the most moving' but there is a pun in that and I'm too serious about the wind to permit any levity in speaking of it."

"Poor maligned Owl. Bird, not train. This train could not be maligned. Except that it is nocturnal, nothing could less resemble that silent flyer. Murchie, the man who wrote about winds, taught me about owls, too."

"My May Day basket to myself is a **new car."**

"I live here more solitary than Thoreau. After all, he walked abroad each afternoon; often he went into the village. He passed the time of day with many people. Why he has been called a hermit I don't know. I have been sitting here two and a half days in this bed writing, without seeing a soul other than the maids. I bet Thoreau never did that in his life."

"Down to the desert in April like a real Hollywoodian, only I wear my rue with a difference. A real Hollywoodian does not come down to visit his sister who lives in a real date garden, one of the oldest in the valley, in a real adobe house set beside a swimming pool that is half reservoir. Though I'm not really at Carmen's, but a quarter of a mile down the road **in a motel."**

In the course of these musings, Miss West reveals that she is not really an authentic member of the

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friendly persuasion either, although she had Sunday School instruction from Richard Nixon's father, but somewhere a quarter of a mile down the road. This, of course, does not invalidate her story of the Quakers, a very charming one.

To See the Dream represents, I think, what is called "feminine writing." This is saddening. A few months ago, in a personal letter, I wrote that further explanations of a matter were unnecessary, "on a blue and gold day like this one." The phrase scorches me every time I remember it; it must have burned the recipient of the letter, too. It wouldn't have bothered Jessamyn West, though. She would have put it in a book. Happy Jessamyn.

Reverse Debunking

MR. LINCOLN. By J. G. Randall. Edited by Richard N. Current. Dodd, Mead. $6.50.

By JOHN COURNOS

WE ARE always glad to meet Mr. Lincoln. Other great men interest us for a while, but this interest is rarely as abiding as that with which "Honest Abe" holds us thrall. It is not only that there is always something new to learn about him but also that his sheer humanness was so intense that we never tire of his company. He if any man had that "touch of nature" that makes the whole world kin.

And so we have still another book on Mr. Lincoln by a man who had previously written a four-volume study, one of the best. Indeed, the late Professor Randall maintained that his subject—the whole of Lincoln—was far too big for even four volumes. The present posthumous volume, in which, in a measure, the editor collaborated, utilizes some of the materials of the larger work to build up a personal portrait with the obvious intention of attracting the reader who has neither the time nor perhaps the inclination to wade through a voluminous work. On the other hand, it must be apparent to any discerning critic that one should have to read a regular biography first. For more than a biography this book is an interpretation of a life, a sort of running commentary sifting legend from fact.

In any ultimate sense this is all to the good; since there can be no debunking of Lincoln, truth can only enhance his prestige. There is, for example, the illuminating chapter called "The Gift of Laughter," in which the author acquits Lincoln of his reputation for smutty humor. He sustains W. O. Stoddard's contention that Lincoln had "never so much as heard" the vast number of "so-called jokes" attributed to him. It is told of him that when someone repeated a bit of foul humor ascribed to him, the President's face would "flush and darken." Indeed, it is stated here that Lincoln did not invent all, or most, of the stories he told. He merely paid the penalty of his reputation for being a joker; and numerous stories were "pinned on him." Categorically, Randall maintains that "altogether unjustly, his humor was associated with thoughtless indifference or even with vul-

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garity." That he had humor in abundance, however, is strongly stressed. It was his humor, indeed, that tided him over many a tight spot, enabled him to bear the sorrows and burdens impossible to sustain but for this "gift of laughter.'" Once, indeed, Randall admits, Lincoln condescended to "a rather atrocious pun," as when he said he was "thin as a shad (yea, worse—as thin as a shadder)"—pardonable, Randall thinks, because "pun making was a habit, or disease, of the age," and that remark "was not so bad as some atrocities that appeared, for instance, in *Punch*." More subtle was his parting shot to a visiting country editor who claimed to have been the first to suggest Lincoln's nomination: "Good-bye, I hope you will feel perfectly easy about having nominated me; don't be troubled about it. *I forgive you.*"

Elsewhere Randall does admit that Lincoln sometimes told risqué stories, but adds the comment that "a story may be amusingly risqué without being offensively vulgar." After all, his "thoughts and conduct were clean." But again, "Lincoln's humor was sometimes as exquisite as the tooled binding of a volume de luxe." The point is made that the President's humor brought him close to the hearts of the people. Incidentally, "it was characteristic of Lincoln's joking while President that the very darkest and stormiest of times would set off an explosion of humor." Follows the comment: "It was the therapy of the spirit." But the New York *Herald* could after his second election begin a long editorial with the words: "President Lincoln is a joke incarnated. His election was a very sorry joke. . . ." And a great deal more along the same line.

I have allowed myself to speak at great length of this chapter on Lincoln's humor because it is the very keynote of the book, and the same effort is made in the other chapters to evade distortion and provide a balanced judgment. Thus, among other things, the author corrects the general impression that the Lincolns were a mismated couple. On the contrary, he says, "they were a close-knit couple . . . a loving and thoroughly devoted couple," and he provides sufficient evidence to make his point. He discusses the pros and cons of the Ann Rutledge affair, and concedes it to be an unsolved mystery.

If there is debunking here, it is debunking in reverse. Lincoln, freed from the dross of false legend, emerges as a character enhanced in stature and nobility, unique in history, whose like we shall never perhaps behold again.

REVIEWERS

Edwin Kennebeck is on the staff of a leading New York publishing house.

Jean Holzhauer writes frequently for *Today*, The Commonweal, and other publications.

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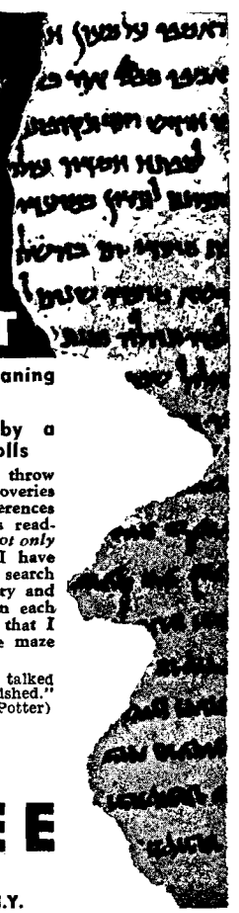

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Then and Now

The fortunes and character of the British Labor party have been greatly modified by the effects of two world wars. Eventually it produced the British welfare state.

The British Labor party pays lip-service to socialism on the understanding that socialism means nothing specific. The Labor party has learned much in the course of its experience as His Majesty's opposition, as well as from its term of office as His Majesty's government. The lesson learned was summed up by Mr. Sidney Webb in an awkward but adhesive phrase, "the inevitability of gradualness." It is a phrase which supplies an excuse in advance for all the disappointments which a Labor government must inflict on those of its supporters who are innocent enough to think that a new government means a new social order. . . .

The younger men of the Labor party have been loath to resign themselves to this depressing law. It is not only their youthful mood of optimism that makes them rebel. They do the propaganda work of the party, and they feel that they must have a hopeful story to tell. . . .

The Labor party itself (as distinguished from its left wing) has not accepted the under-consumption theory. It has, however, adopted a proposal for very drastic taxation of the rich. To the existing income tax and super-tax it would add a surtax of 10 percent on "unearned" incomes exceeding £500. But the right wing of the Labor party is so far orthodox in its economics that it would earmark the yield of the surtax for the redemption of public debt. The left wing has no use for debt-redemption; it insists that the money be spent on social services.

Nationalization used to be the panacea of all our socialists. It is now cold-shouldered by right wing and left wing. The socialism of the right is nothing but a gradualist empiricism, while the left, virtually or explicitly denying that there is any problem of production, would embark on an adventure in the forcible redistribution of wealth, in the hope that somehow or other it may come to pass that "unlimited consumption will lead to unlimited production."

—Henry Somerville in The Commonweal, November 9, 1927

Until recently, the Tory and Labor Parties have been thought of as reflecting two sets of supposedly conflicting and very specific interests. The Tories were the party of business enterprise, of property and—at least so their enemies not altogether correctly alleged—of profits and privilege. Over against them stood the Labor Party, representing, in theory at any rate, the wage-earners and the underprivileged, real and alleged—in short, the underdog in general.

Recently, however, a change has been noticeable in the whole character of the party battle, and the chief cause of this change has been the development of an alarming shortage of underdogs. These interesting zoological specimens have now become so rare—at least in any clearly recognizable form—that for all practical purposes the species may be treated as extinct. The fact is that the great menacing problems of social justice, with which we were so intensely concerned during the thirties, have in England, as in most advanced countries, been substantially solved.

In Britain, as the reader is probably aware, we have a highly organized form of socialism which we call the Welfare State. In this Welfare State the citizen is more or less effectively cushioned against the shocks of unmerited misfortune such as unemployment, sickness, want in old age, etc.; in particular, everything humanly possible is done to free the young from the handicaps of circumstance.

It would, of course, be a wild exaggeration to say that all hardship has been eliminated, or that those who have become dependent on allowances paid by the state do not often have to face something very like extreme penury; but nobody is singing in the street or selling bootlaces at the street corner for the price of a cup of coffee. With all its shortcomings, the world in which we live is transformed beyond all recognition from that in which we lived before the war.

—J. L. Benvenisti in The Commonweal, December 7, 1956

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